

**ALASKA YOUNG COPE WITH GRIEF IN JOHN  
GREEN'S *LOOKING FOR ALASKA***

**THESIS**

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Sarjana  
Degree of English Department Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya**



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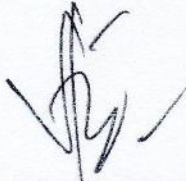
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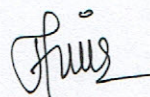
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## ABSTRACT

Thoyyibah, Wasilatut. 2018. Alaska Young Copes with Grief in John Green's *Looking for Alaska*. Thesis. English Department Faculty of Adab and Humanities. State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

Advisor: Dr. Wahyu Kusumajanti, M.Hum.

This study attempts to analyze the main character, Alaska Young in John Green's *Looking for Alaska*. It focuses on Alaska's characterization and the way Alaska copes with her grief through her whole life. New criticism is applied as the supporting theory to find out the characterization of Alaska Young. The characterization then is used to support the main analysis of the research. Coping mechanism is applied as the main theory to find out the way Alaska copes with her grief. The results reveal that Alaska Young has some characteristics: smart, unpredictable, self-blame, hopeless, and impulsive. Alaska's characterization shows that she has problem dealing with trauma when she was a child. The way Alaska copes with grief can be seen while she used some of strategies that included into emotion-focused coping that are self-control, accepting responsibility, distancing, and escape-avoidance. However, coping is not always effective, thus, some of the strategies that Alaska used has made her failing in facing her problem. It can be said that Alaska has unresolved grief.

**Keywords:** grief, coping mechanism, traumatic experience

## INTISARI

Thoyyibah, Wasilatut. 2018. Alaska Young Copes with Grief in John Green's *Looking for Alaska*. Skripsi. Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

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Skripsi ini berupaya untuk menganalisa karakter utama, Alaska Young pada novel *Looking for Alaska* karya John Green. Penelitian ini focus pada penokohan Alaska dan bagaimana cara dia mengatasi kedukaanya sepanjang hidupnya. New Criticism diterapkan sebagai teori pendukung untuk mengetahui penokohan Alaska Young. Penokohan tersebut kemudian digunakan untuk mendukung analisa utama dari penelitian. Coping mechanism diterapkan sebagai teori utama untuk menemukan cara Alaska mengatasi kesedihannya. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Alaska Young memiliki beberapa penokohan: cerdas, tak terduga, menyalahkan diri sendiri, putus asa, dan impulsif. Dari penokohan Alaska menunjukkan bahwa dia memiliki masalah dalam melupakan trauma ketika dia masih kecil. Cara Alaska mengatasi kesedihan dapat dilihat ketika ia menggunakan beberapa strategi yang fokus pada emosi yaitu self-control, accepting responsibility, distancing, dan escape-avoidance. Namun, strategi tersebut tidak selalu efektif. Beberapa strategi yang digunakan Alaska telah membuatnya gagal dalam mengatasi masalahnya. Dapat dikatakan bahwa Alaska masih memiliki masalah kesedihan yang belum terselesaikan.

Kata kunci: kedukaan, coping mechanism, pengalaman traumatis



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2017). Some people may openly express their feeling and emotion. On the contrary, others will prefer to keep their feeling, thought and emotions just for themselves. Some people are able to move through the feeling of loss quickly, but others will take much time to heal.

One way to convey feeling and emotion is by expressing it verbally or in written text. Some people may not be able to express what actually they feel by saying verbally. Rather, they prefer to write what actually they feel since writing can be used as a form of self-expression. Therefore, literary works do exist. As said by Klarer, literature is referred to the whole of written expression (1). Thus, the purpose of literary work is to express a feeling or thought created with the desire to communicate an experience. The genre of literary works can be in the form of poetry, drama, and prose. In this case, people who are likely to write down what experience they have, may put the feeling of loss into a poem, drama script, or novel.

In literature, there are some different terms that are used in order to describe the reaction of loss. Mourning is defined to be the cultural responses through bereavement (Howarth 5). This includes the outward expression of loss. Since the experience is tied into culture, then this is also related to the memorial service, funeral and how people dress in bereavement. As an example, if one of a family member dies, all of members of family will dress in black in order to mourn. Another response of loss that is added by Howarth is grief. Grief is defined as various psychological, physical, spiritual and behavioral reactions to the loss (Howarth 5). Grief affects our entire being include mind, body, spirit, and



emotion. If mourning is external, then, grief is more internal. Thus, it is known that grief is dealing with the personal issue.

As known before that people may use literary works as the form of expression toward loss, so that, it is common that the discussion of grief appears in some novels. *Looking for Alaska* is one of the novels that discusses about loss and grief. The discussion is reflected in the main character, Alaska Young.

Alaska Young, as the main character in John Green's *Looking for Alaska* has experienced the grief. She has lost her mother when she was still in childhood and it became serious thing since her mother died in front of her but she could not do anything even just called 911. Therefore, it made her feel regret through her whole life, and it makes her failing to forgive herself. From that bad experience, it involves her thought about how she fascinates on death and her self-destructive behavior during her youth.

The problem dealing with grief becomes interesting since it is often happening in life in which people usually feel despair and do not have any hope when he/she loses a loved one. By studying Alaska's character, it will reveal how Alaska who has coped and struggled through her whole life with grief.

*Looking for Alaska* is included into young adult literature. Young adult literature described as coming-of-age novels that tell about the first experience of young person, such as, falling in love, deciding decision, and taking responsibility. It is hoped to give them a more mature understanding of self and the world (Owen 11).



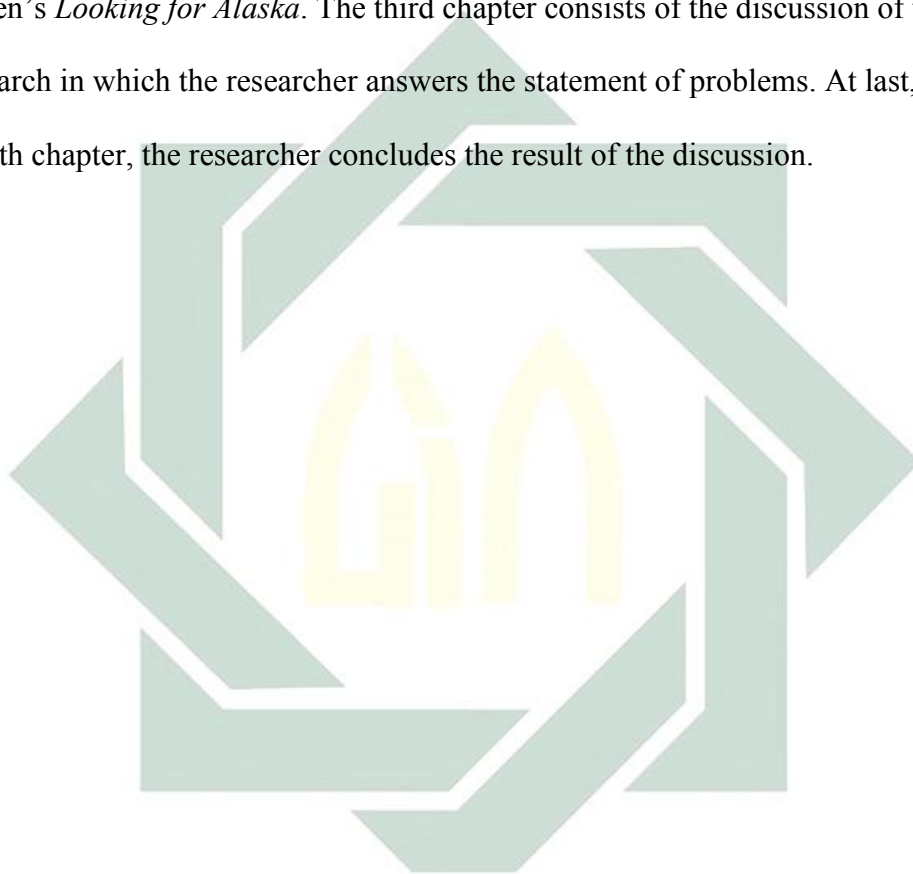








objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, method of the study (which includes research design, data source, data collecting, data analysis), and presentation of the study. In the second chapter, the researcher explains the related theory and shows some of related studies dealing with John Green's *Looking for Alaska*. The third chapter consists of the discussion of the research in which the researcher answers the statement of problems. At last, in the fourth chapter, the researcher concludes the result of the discussion.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

In conducting the research, the researcher realizes that it is important to comprehend the theory that is used to support the discussion in the next chapter. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher discusses coping mechanism theory as the main theory. Meanwhile, new criticism is also applied as the supporting theory. As the supporting theory, new criticism here focuses on Alaska's character and characterization. As the main theory, coping mechanism is used to find out how Alaska Young copes with her problem. In addition, this chapter discusses some previous studies as well, to see the differences between this current research and the previous research.

##### 2.1.1 New Criticism

Tyson explained that "new criticism occupies an unusual position in the field of literary studies" (135). It has dominated literary studies from the 1940s through the 1960s (135). Selden et al. explained that new criticism focused principally on poetry (21). But, Carter stated in his book, *Literary Theory*, there is one writer who is Mark Schorer, extended its main precepts in new criticism to include analysis of prose fiction (28). Therefore, new criticism is one of literary studies that can be used to analyze both of poetry and prose fiction such as novel and short story.

"The text itself" became a new critical effort to focus the attention on the literary work as the single source of evidence for interpreting literary works (Tyson 136). New criticism does not seek a text's 'meaning', but how it speaks itself. Moreover, it is concerned to trace how the parts of the text relate, how it achieves its 'order' and 'harmony', how it contains and resolves 'irony', 'paradox', 'tension', 'ambivalence' and 'ambiguity' (Selden et al 19). Therefore, new criticism is clearly characterized in premise and practice which is not concerned with context such as historical, biographical, intellectual and so on. Rather, it is concerned merely with the 'text in itself', with its language and organization.

Sometimes a literary text does not live up to the author's intention, and it is even more meaningful, rich, and complex than the author realized. Sometimes the text's meaning is simply different from the meaning the author wanted it to have. Knowing an author's intention, therefore, tells us nothing about the text itself, which is why the term intentional fallacy emerged. This term refers to the mistaken belief that the author's intention is the same as the text's meaning (Tyson 136). Meanwhile, readers' feelings or opinions about a text may be produced by some personal association from past experience rather than by the text. Such a conclusion would be an example called as affective fallacy (137). It can be said that according to new criticism, there are two mistaken beliefs in analyzing literary works. New criticism believes that it is better to ignore the author's intention and readers' feeling or opinion in analyzing literary works.



Due to the focus of the research that will focus on Alaska's character, and her description in the novel, therefore, here, the researcher will give more explanation dealing with character and characterization.

Benett and Royle state in their book, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory* that:

This is also related with what Mullan said that, characters in literary works may resemble one human being (79). However, Mullan adds that characters in literary works may use as a representation of social phenomenon (85). Somehow, most of characters in literary works are ‘life-like’, in which they are like ‘real’ people. In order that to be ‘life-like’ or like ‘real’ people, there are some requirements to be fulfilled.

The first requirement for such a character to be 'life-like' is to have a common name, then to say and do things that seem certain like the kinds of things people say and do in so-called 'real life'. The second requirement is a certain complexity. Without this complexity, a character appears merely like one dimensional, or flat. To be life-like, a fictional character should have a number of different traits. Traits which may be conflicting, characters should be, to some extent, unpredictable, the words and actions should appear to originate in multiple impulses. Thirdly, these tensions, contradictions, multiplicities should coherence in a single identity (Benett and Royle 62). So, the more life a character, the more it will lead the reader to feel empathy toward the character's feeling.

Generally, characters in a literary work can be either type or individual. Dealing with the type, characters can be divided into two. The first is flat character. This type of character is dominated by one specific trait which often represents an abstract idea or general traits of a group of people. The second is round character. It usually denotes a person with more complex and differentiated features. Meanwhile, the individualization of a character has evolved into a main feature of the genre of the novel (Klarer 17).

Overall, character can be said as the representation of human beings. Most characters in literary works have to feel like 'real' people. Thus, there are some requirements to be fulfilled as a 'life-like' character. Besides, there are two types of character, the first is flat character, and other is round character.







feel tension, pressure, or negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. Other people view stress as the response to these situations. This response includes physiological changes, such as increased heart rate and muscle tension as well as emotional and behavioral changes. However, most psychologists regard stress as a process involving a person's interpretation and response to a threatening event (Baqtayan 480). In their book, *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*, Lazarus and Folkman define stress as an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that people experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their wellbeing. (12). It can be said that stress is a state that people mostly dislike but people have to deal with it and try to find out how it can be solved.

However, to be clearer in understanding the concept of stress, it is important to know that stress has some sources, in which it is called stressor. Lazarus and Folkman have identified some categories of stressor. The first is Cataclysmic Stressor. This term refers to the unexpected event which has big impact on either individual or community at the same time, such as, natural disasters (earthquake and storms), and war. The second is Background Stressor. Background Stressor comes from everyday problem or it may call as "daily hassles". This stressor considers as a small problem but it happens continuously. Thus, it can interfere with and cause negative stress to the individual, such as having lots of responsibilities, feeling lonely, and arguing with spouse and family and others. The third stressor is Personal Stressor. This stressor affects individually and may or may not be predictable. Yet, it has a strong influence and

requires considerable coping effort from someone like suffering a deadly disease, being fired, divorced, the death of a loved one, and so forth. Personal Stressor is often more difficult to overcome than Cataclysmic Stressor because of the lack of support from other individuals who share the same fate (16). So that, there are three sources of stress or stressors, and those three stressors have different pressure and different ways to manage it.

People and groups also differ in their sensitivity to certain types of stress events, as well as in their interpretations and reactions. One person responds to stress with anger, another with depression, yet another with anxiety or guilt; and still others feel challenged rather than threatened (Lazarus and Folkman 22-23). Therefore, patterns of coping differed as well. Then, there is no doubt that personality influences both the appraisal of stress as well as the use of coping strategies in a stressful situation. In particular, individuals high in emotionality tend to report more stressful events and annoyances, and they are more likely to cope in ways that increase emotional distress, such as the use of alcohol or other drugs, denial, and so on (Aldwin 112). So, in the stressful situation and condition, people exactly try to cope with the problem or the stress. Thus, the concept of coping emerges.

Despite the concept of stress and coping is neutral, people generally see stress and coping as two opposites. Some people may see stress as negative, and coping as positive. However, stress can be psychologically positive or negative, and the means of coping can be effective or ineffective in meeting the challenge presented by the stressful situation (Baqtayan 481).

Lazarus and Folkman give a meaning to coping as the cognitive and behavioral efforts to master, reduce, or tolerate demands (134). There are three key features in this definition. First, it is process oriented, meaning that it focuses on what the person actually thinks and does in a specific stressful encounter, and how this changes as the encounter, and how this changes as the encounter unfolds. Second, coping viewed as contextual. That is influenced by the person's appraisal of the actual demands in the encounter and resources for managing them, the emphasis on context means that particular person and situation variables together shape coping efforts. Third, there are no a priori assumptions about what constitutes good or bad coping; coping is defined as a person's efforts to manage demands, whether or not the efforts are successful (Lazarus et. al 1993). Then, it is obvious that coping is dealing with how people see the stressful condition and situation and people effort to deal with the problem. It just deals with the effort and does not emphasize whether the coping is effective or not.

Kenneth Matheny and his coworkers reviewed a large body of coping research and arrived at a similar definition. They defined coping as "any effort, healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate, or weaken stressors, or to tolerate their effects in the least hurtful manner." One aspect of this definition deserves comment that is coping efforts are not always healthy and constructive (qtd in Baqutayan 481). People sometimes adopt coping strategies that actually get them into more difficulty. One example is the person who embezzles money to solve personal financial problems (Baqutayan 481). Accordingly, the definitions of coping must include efforts to manage stressful



*Death and Dying* (1969) divides the grieving process into five stages. The five stages include (1) denial, (2) anger, (3) depression, (4) bargaining, and (5) acceptance (Brand et al. 1). In the denial phase, people who experiences grief usually deny the reality. It is also conscious and unconscious refusal to accept fact and information dealing with the loss. The second is anger, people in this stage dealing with emotional upset can be angry with their self. The third stage is bargaining. In this stage, people who is facing grieve can involve an attempt to bargain everything that will inevitably happen or even to negate something that has already happened. The fourth stage is depression. This stage is sort of acceptance but with emotional attachment. A person showing signs of depression stage of grieving may feel sad, regret, fear, uncertainty, cry frequently, cling, whine, and experiment with alcohol. The last stage is acceptance. In this stage, people who experiences grieve may increase their energy and renewed hope for the future ([www.montgomeryschollsmid.org/](http://www.montgomeryschollsmid.org/) accessed on August 25, 2017). However, not everyone goes through these stages in the same order or with the same intensity. So that, there are individual differences in the way experience the phases of grief.

The five stages above can be assumed to be normal grief. Meanwhile, there are some people that experiences grief which last longer than other normal grief. This can happen when people are prevented from moving through the tasks adequately, the normal bereavement process is interrupted, grief reactions become much more painful and weakening and complicated grief or unresolved grief may develop (Howarth 5). This implied that people who experience complicated or



In general, emotion-focused forms of coping are more likely to occur when there has been an appraisal that nothing can be done to modify harmful, threatening, or challenging environmental conditions. Problem-focused forms of coping, on the other hand, are more probable when such conditions are appraised as amenable to change (Lazarus and Folkman 150).

So, coping here refer to strategy in which people use to manage with the demand of the stress. There are two different ways in coping dealing with the function of coping. Those are problem-focused coping and emotion focused-coping.

#### 2.1.2.1 Problem-Focused Coping

[illegible]







stress too much; try to forget the whole thing dealing with the problem; make light of the situation by using humor; refuse to get too serious about stress problem.

#### **2.1.2.2.4 Positive Reappraisal**

Fourth, positive reappraisal is described as efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth. It also has a religious tone. As like, change or grow as a person in a good way; find new faith; pray to God.

#### **2.1.2.2.5 Accepting Responsibility**

The fifth emotion-focused coping is accepting responsibility. It is acknowledged as one's own role in the problem with a concomitant of trying to put things right. Such as, criticize or lecture oneself; realize and bring the problem on oneself; try to say apologize or did something to make up.

#### **2.1.2.2.6 Escape-Avoidance**

The last is escape-avoidance. It is described as wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid the stress. These items, which suggest escape-avoidance, contrast with the items on the distancing scale which suggests detachment. Such as, wish that the situation would go away or somehow be over with; try to make oneself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medications, etc; avoided being with people in general and slept more than usual (Lazarus et. al 995). There are six coping that include emotion-focused coping. Here, in seeking social support is actually included into both emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.





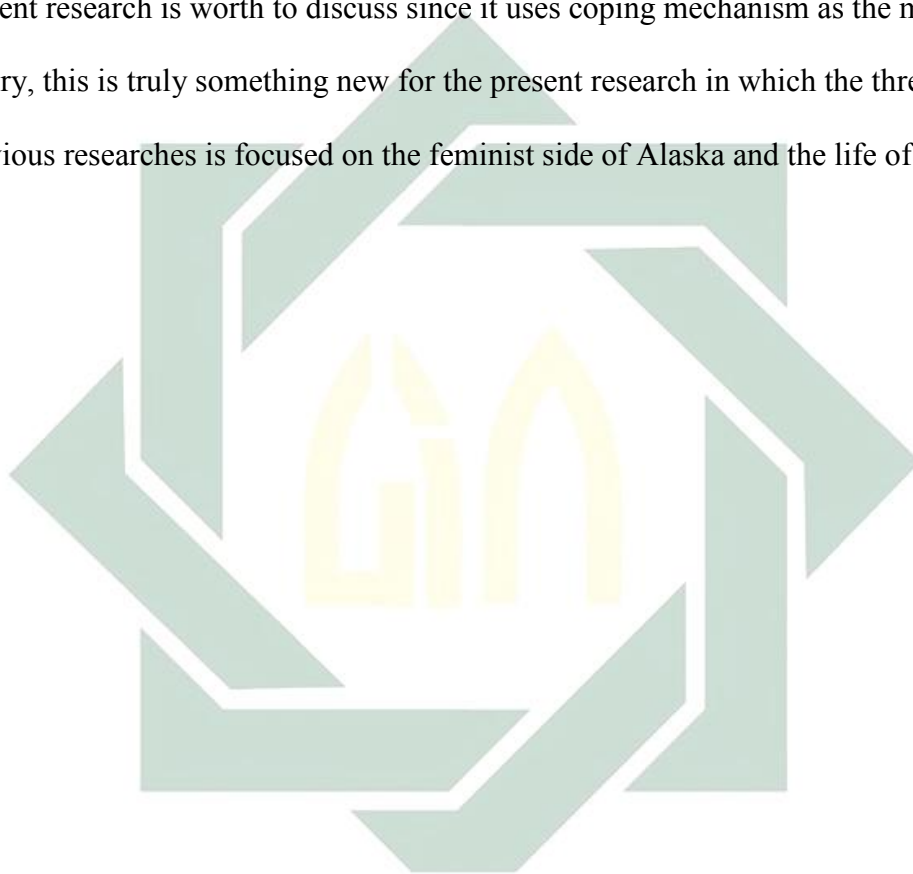
The second is entitled: *Miles Struggle to Find a Meaningful Life in John Green's Looking for Alaska: a New Criticism Study* by Marcy Sulistyo Putri (2015) from Airlangga University. This research discusses how Miles's struggle to find a meaningful life portrays in plot, characterization, and irony and how Miles' understanding about the meaningful life as well. Here, new criticism is applied as approach and close reading as the method. However, in the research, the result of the research show that the plot of the story can reveal how Miles' struggle to find a meaningful life. Through the plot of the story, Miles characterization and the linguistic device which is irony can be revealed as well. It shows that plot, characterization, and irony actually working together to build the theme.

The third is entitled: *An Analysis of Feminism Elements in Green's Looking for Alaska* by Citra Aulia Johansari (2016) from Pasundan University. In this research, the researcher is describing the main female character who is Alaska Young in order to find the women issue that is related to feminism. Moreover, Johansari as researcher thinks that there is a lot of meaning which still ambiguous in the novel, so therefore, in analyzing the novel, the researcher using the structural approach. By using structural approach, the writer tries to analyze the intrinsic element that is the conflict of the novel by linking all aspects such as setting, plot, and character. Then, the researcher discusses the state of psychology of Alaska that touched on women's issues closely with feminist view.

Compared with the three previous studies above, this present research has similarities and differences. Similar to the three previous studies is that this

current research uses the same novel that is John Green's *Looking for Alaska*.

Furthermore, the differences between the three previous research and this present research is that it focuses on Alaska's character and characterization, meanwhile, most of the previous researches are focus on the life of Miles. Moreover, this present research is worth to discuss since it uses coping mechanism as the main theory, this is truly something new for the present research in which the three previous researches is focused on the feminist side of Alaska and the life of Miles.



**ALASKA YOUNG COPES WITH GRIEF IN JOHN GREEN'S *LOOKING FOR ALASKA***

Regarding the explanation above, in this chapter, the researcher divides the analysis into two parts. First, the researcher discusses about Alaska Young's description to answer the research problem number one. After that, the result of the description of Alaska Young is used to support the next problem. Thus, in the second part, the researcher discusses the way Alaska copes with her problem using coping mechanism theory.

Based on the data that have been gathered, the researcher found the description of Alaska as follows:

A person is considered smart when he/she has ease and quick capacity for learning, reasoning, and understanding (Legg and Hutter 2). This definition can be





She told me that I reminded her of the Colonel when he came to Culver Creek. They were freshmen together, she said, both scholarship kids with, as she put it, “a shared interest in booze and mischief.” But for the wrong crowd, they both seemed awfully smart (Green 19).

That quotation revealed that Alaska was a scholarship student, and it was certainly not surprising because in the previous discussion, Alaska was clever and could make her friends understand the difficult subject. Even though, sometimes she considered as a girl who like to break the rules of school, she was still assumed as quite smart.

Furthermore, Alaska’s intelligence could be seen from her way expressing her ideas. Her eyes were fluorescent telling her favorite book written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, entitled *The General in His Labyrinth*. She told Miles that the book was telling about Simon Bolivar and his last words. It was known through the novel that Miles was the person who was interested in people’s last words, therefore, Alaska told Miles that Simon Bolivar had interesting last words which still became mystery. It made her curious to know what actually Simon Bolivar’s last words mean was. The way Alaska talked about the book made Miles was exactly amazed by Alaska’s intelligence: ....the way she talked that first night about getting out of the labyrinth—so smart (Green 29).

Thus, it can be concluded that Alaska is a smart girl. Her intelligence can be seen from the way she expressed her idea. Besides that, she helped her friends understand the difficult pre-calculus, and succeeded to assist them getting B+ score. Also, her intelligence deserved her scholarship.

### 3.1.2 Unpredictable

People may find other people likely to change without reason to be predicted. Those people can be said as unpredictable (Cambridge English Dictionary). Despite her intelligence, through the novel, Alaska is considered as an unpredictable person as well.

Alaska's unpredictability was seen when her sympathy to others change quickly to ignorance. In the previous discussion, she helped her friends by teaching pre-calculus to them, but in other events in the novel, she was described ignoring someone who needed her help. It happened when Miles drowned by Weekday Warriors. At that night, after Miles survived his own life when he was drowned to the lake with his hand tied, Miles went to Alaska's room and asked for help and told to her what already happened to him. Instead of giving empathy, Alaska mocked him and said that it was something trivial, Miles should not take it hard. Alaska's attitude had annoyed Miles badly that he told Colonel what happened to him. Colonel realized that Miles was got trapped by other friends which was included into Weekday Warriors. Besides, Miles also explained to Colonel about Alaska's reaction: "Alaska was kind of mean to me tonight," I said. I leaned over, opened an empty desk drawer, and used it as a makeshift ashtray. "Like I said, she's moody." Colonel said (Green 27). From that quotation, it is clear that in other character's opinion Alaska was unpredictable.

Furthermore, Alaska's unpredictability was also admitted by Takumi, another character. According to Takumi, Alaska was currently angry to the Weekday Warriors because they had drowned Miles in the lake. However,







Then, Alaska answered that it was impossible if her father did not blame her. It was known that actually she felt guilty not only for not being able to save her mother's life, but also toward her father. Takumi was still curious and added that at the time Alaska was still a child, and it was not fair to blame a child in such an incident. But, Alaska replied to Takumi that little kid surely could dial 911. It also proved that Alaska blamed herself because she did not do such little thing merely to save her mother's life.

Another moment, Alaska ever told Miles if she did not want to disappoint her father. It was happened when Alaska and her friends called by the jury because she was caught by Mr. Starnes, the teacher (known as the Eagle) while she was smoking in school area. However, Alaska felt nervous at that time, but she tried to encourage Miles who was also called by the jury to not make this as a burden. It was seventh time, Alaska been caught smoking in school, and that was made her afraid of her father. As she told Miles, "...I just don't want—whatever. I don't want to upset my dad." (Green 57). From that quotation, it showed that Alaska did not want to make her father disappointed anymore, after her mother's death.

Another data that indicated Alaska was blaming herself is when she suddenly cried and said sorry to Miles, but according to Miles she did not do anything wrong. Miles who did not know what actually happen to her just startled and asked what was going on. Alaska answered as in the quotation below:

"I don't..." she started, and then a sob came like a tsunami, her cry so loud and childlike that it scared me, and I got up, sat down next her, and put my arm around her. She turned away, pushing her head into the foam of the



couch. “I don’t understand why I screw everything up,” she said. (Green 95)

That quotation revealed that Alaska still could not forgive herself. Any kind of things that came to stressful condition made her always addressed just to herself. She always believed that anything in her life was all messy and it because of her. Alaska also told Miles that it even hard to understand herself. “I try not to be scared, you know. But I still ruin everything. I still fuck up” (Green 96). Again, Alaska was still blaming herself for anything.

The way Alaska always blame herself can be connected with the incident that happened when she was a child and lost her mother. From this point, it is known that Alaska has trauma that makes her cannot trust herself and just accused herself of anything wrong to be her fault.

### 3.1.4 Hopeless

Someone who feels hopeless may feel a desperate sense that a situation is impossible to deal with. The feeling of hopelessness will lead the person to feel very unhappy since the thought that there seems to be no possibility of a better situation or success (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Alaska showed the sign that she was really hopeless or desperate. This was particularly dealing with the trauma that she experienced in her childhood, when she had lost her mother. Alaska often showed her hopelessness through the dark humor she uttered. She did talk about dying and according to Miles, it is not merely just humor, the way Alaska talked was not even in a joke, she talked as if it would happen to her, or she would do it by herself.

This can be proved when Alaska was doing group learning for pre-calculus with all of her friends. As told before that in this group learning, Alaska taught some of her friends who had difficulty in understanding pre-calculus. At that time, she explained about linear equation and one of her friends, Hank, could not understand with the explanation of Alaska. This made Alaska annoyed and mocked him that it was his fault to be stupid. Hank replied that he was better than Alaska since he was consuming marijuana, while, Alaska was consuming cigarette, in which it had bad influences than marijuana. Instead of angry with the statement of Hank, Alaska used her dark humor as: Alaska swallowed a mouthful of french fries, took a drag on her cigarette, and blew smoke across the table at Hank. "I may die young," she said. "But at least I'll die smart. Now, back to tangents." (Green 52).

The quotation also showed that Alaska certainly tried to make a joke, but that joke was not a kind of joke that made her friends to laugh aloud. It implied that she does not even care if cigarettes really have the bad influence for her, she would let it, and it was not the problem if she would die because of the cigarettes, at least she would die smart.

Moreover, Alaska also had ever told the same joke about dying. It happened when she and her gang are smoking near the river. Firstly, they just smoked while playing rapping game. They rapped alternately to each other, and when it turned for Takumi, Alaska has finished her cigarettes and flicked it into the river. Miles directly asked to Alaska the reason why she smoked so fast. Alaska replied: "Y'all smoke to enjoy it. I smoke to die." (Green 43)

When Alaska uttered that sentence, Alaska was clearly smiling widely, and she seemed to tell a not so funny joke. Again, the way Alaska talked about death liked she was really meant to say it and wanted to go through it.

Another data which also support as Alaska's hopeless is her note in the book *The General in His Labyrinth*. The book was found by Colonel and Miles:

The whole passage was underlined in bleeding, water-soaked black ink. But there was another ink, this one a crisp blue, post-flood, and an arrow led from “How will I ever get out of this labyrinth!” to a margin note written in her loop-heavy cursive: *Straight & Fast* (Green 152).

Through this novel, Alaska was told as one of characters who fascinated on Simon Bolivar's thought about labyrinth. When she talked about the labyrinth, she seemed to want to get out of the labyrinth. From Miles and Colonel's discovery, it was written in the book *Straight & Fast* meant that Alaska wanted to get out from her labyrinth of the problem as soon as possible or it can be said that she wanted to end up her problem soon. If it was connected to the accident that happened to Alaska which has made her died, thus, it seemed that Alaska was feeling hopeless toward her problem. Miles and Colonel assumed that *Straight & Fast* might imply as Alaska meant to end her life by the accident. Furthermore, Alaska's hopeless has admitted by Miles. He assumed that anything happened in Alaska's life because she had not any hope in life. This is what Miles said:

And if Alaska took her own life, that is the hope I wish I could have given her. Forgetting her mother, failing her mother and her friends and herself—those are awful things, but she did not need to fold into herself and self-destruct (Green 218).



want to get expelled, since it would make her father disappointed with her, so that she opened up the secret of Marya who was currently drunk with her boyfriend in her room. Even though, Alaska would consider as betrayer among her friends.

Another data that show how impulsive Alaska is when Alaska got an accident. It was about the night before she freaked out and wanted to get out from dormitory. It was known that all of students were not allowed to get out from dormitory in the middle of night. Moreover, Alaska's condition was drunk at the night. But, Alaska did not tell to the Colonel and Miles the reason why she wanted to get out. She just cried, screamed and begged to them, so that they would help her get out from dormitory: "Goddamn it! God, how did this happen? How could she be so stupid! She just never thought anything through. So goddamned impulsive. Christ. It is not okay. I can't believe she was so *stupid!*" (Green 142).

Thus, on the next day, Colonel was so angry with Alaska and accused the reason why she got the accident because of her impulsiveness. She did not think anything through at that time, and yet Colonel also blamed Alaska why she could not just think clearly before doing something.

Another data show that Alaska is impulsive person is when she challenges Miles to hook up with her. When Miles and Takumi have talked about the accident that happen to Alaska, Miles also told Takumi that before the accident happened, he and Alaska have been kissing. Absolutely, Takumi was shocked for a while in which Alaska has a boyfriend, and Miles was currently dating Lara. Miles then gave an excused: “I—look, you know how she was. She wanted to do something, and she did it...” (Green 182).













Takumi shook his head, his hands pushing aside leaves to dig into the still-wet dirt beneath. “I just don’t get why she’d be so afraid of getting expelled. I’d hate to get expelled, but you have to take your lumps. I don’t get it.”

“True. She only goes home over Christmas and the summer, when Jake is there. But whatever. I don't like home, either. But I'd never give the Eagle the satisfaction.” (Green 74).

### 3.2.4 Escape-Avoidance

[illegible]

wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape-avoid the problem. The way Alaska uses escape-avoidance as her coping is seen from some of her behaviors. The first behavior that she used is smoking. As seen in the quotation: And then she lit a cigarette and sucked on it so hard for so long that I thought the entire thing might burn off in one drag (Green 17).

That quotation explained the first impression when Alaska was talking with Miles. Alaska met Miles near the river, and they have talked about the book that Alaska fascinated much, *The General in His Labyrinth*. During they have talked, Miles watched over Alaska who smoked too heavy. Miles was dumbfounded to see the way Alaska smoked. He never saw people who smoke so heavy as if she would finish consumed the cigarette in an instant.

Then, when Miles curious about the books that existed in Alaska's room, he asked Alaska whether or not she has already read all of the books. Alaska said that she did not finish reading all of the books yet. She just bought the books from garage sale, and she would read the book in the time when she was old and nothing seemed she have to do. For now, she thought it was better did others things, as she said: "...But there is so much to do: *cigarettes to smoke*, sex to have, swings to swing on. I'll have more time for reading when I'm old and boring." (Green 18).

Alaska admitted that smoking was one of the activities that she had to enjoy during youth, and read books were not including into it. So, smoking was



one of important things for her. ‘As she lit a new cigarette off the butt of her previous one’ (Green 19).

That quotation was also shown that Alaska was really a heavy smoker. It happened when Alaska was telling Miles that he remained her with Colonel when he first came to Culver Creek, and as like before, she always smoked in gap of the conversation. As what Miles observed, Alaska always smoked too heavy, even she directly took another cigarette after she finished the first one.

Another evidence that shown Alaska as a heavy smoker is when she taught some of her friends about pre-calculus. Miles explained that: Alaska taught class, smoking while she ate.... She smoked and talked and ate for an hour without stopping... (Green 51).

The addiction of Alaska in smoking was not doubted anymore. She used to smoke in every chance she could. Although, she had to teach her friends about pre-calculus, she still smoked and ate as much as she can without stopping. Another time, when she got caught smoking with her friends by the Eagle, instead of regret to what she has done, she did this thing: Alaska crouched down, picked up the cigarette she had thrown away, and started smoking again (Green 56).

That quotation indicated that Alaska was exactly addicted to smoke and she still disobeyed the rules even she had already caught. At the night after she got caught, she even bravely went to Miles’s room and smoked there: Alaska, though, who was 1. in our room after dark with the door closed, and 2. smoking a cigarette as she sat on the mostly foam couch (Green 59).



in the TV lounge, this was what Alaska did: Alaska took a sip of Mountain Dew and grabbed my hand in hers (Green 52).

If Colonel used trick by using milk bottle to be filled with Alcohol, Alaska did not hide the fact that she was truly holds Mountain Dew (one kind of wine) in her hand while she sat in TV lounge with Miles. Moreover, when Thanksgiving holiday came, Miles was not going home because of he was asked by Alaska to accompany her in the dormitory, Alaska brought Miles to the soccer field in which she has buried the wine there. She told Miles that she used a fake ID to buy some alcohols and vodka. Vodka was for Colonel and Alaska just let him to hide anywhere he wanted: “Aye, matey. Precisely. Although wine consumption has risen a bit this semester, so we’ll need to take a trip tomorrow. This is the last bottle.” She unscrewed the cap—no corks here—sipped, and handed it to me... (Green 81).

From that quotation, it is revealed that the way Alaska consumed Alcohol raised in a semester and when she invited Miles to the soccer field, it was the last bottle that she had. Miles seemed afraid that he and Alaska would get caught again, but Alaska tried to calm down Miles that the Eagle would not caught them. It was holiday time, and the Eagle would think that everyone was going home for holiday: So we lay in the tall grass between the soccer field and the woods, passing the bottle back and forth and tilting our heads up to sip the wine-inducing wine (Green 82).

That quotation indicated that both of them did not care anymore about breaking the rules while drank alcohol in the school. The ignorance of the rules can be seen as they became drunk more and more in the soccer field.

Another moment, Alaska ever admitted that she was actually the best one at drink. As she said: “Cause I’m the best drinker and the best storyteller,” she answered (Green 115).

Alaska uttered the sentence when she and her gang spent a night at the barn after finished the prank, Alaska suggested playing Best Day and Worst Day games. She also suggested that she would decide who the winner of the game since she was best in drinking and storytelling. It can be proved that: She drank without lifting her head from the hay (Green 120).

The way Alaska drank showed that she tried to hide what feeling she felt at that time, that was the trauma she had in which it was explained that Alaska drank until her face became deadpan and emotionless. On the next day, Alaska was wake up by Colonel, in case they have to be hurry to back to the dormitory. If they did not come back soon, Colonel afraid if the Eagle would catch them. Alaska was asked by Colonel if she was in good condition since last night she has drunk too much. In fact, Alaska was sipping wine when she already woke up and said that she was still fine and had a better morning. Miles suggested to Alaska:

“Maybe you shouldn’t drink so much,” I suggested.

“Pudge.” She shook her head and sipped the cold coffee and wine. “Pudge, what you must understand about me is that I am a deeply unhappy person.” (Green 124).

From what Alaska said, it indicated that Alaska actually used alcohol as something to make her forgot about the problem she had. By uttered the words 'unhappy person' meant that Alaska admitted that she depressed and that was the reason why she used alcohol as her escape and avoidance from thinking about the problem too much.

Unfortunately, the addiction of Alaska toward alcohol had made her to get an accident which make her could not be safe. At the night before it happen, Miles and Colonel came to Alaska's room to celebrate the succeeded of the barn night. Colonel and Alaska has been celebrated it several days, yet Miles did not want to include to celebrate it by drinking Strawberry Hills. He just wanted to be exist there and saw them party while read Edgar Allan Poe's biography: Alaska and the Colonel drank wine from paper cups with flowers on them. "...We go'n match each other Dixie cup for Dixie cup till the lesser drinker falls." Alaska said (Green 129-130).

Alaska suggested that they would play drinking match again with truth or dare, and the one who was available to play with Alaska was Miles, because Colonel was already drunk at that time.

After a while, the incident was happened, Alaska wanted to get out from school, she screamed, cried and begged to Colonel and Miles to trick the Eagle, so that she can get out from school at that night. But, Colonel and Miles did not know why Alaska wanted to get out from dorm. Finally, they just helped her without wanted to knowing the reason behind.







Colonel, who is the close friend of Alaska ever told Miles about how Alaska loved sex. This happened when Colonel was telling about basketball team in Culver Creek who was not good enough as school team basketball. The one that can be relied on as the best player is Hank Walsten. Colonel described him as: “He loves weed like Alaska loves sex,” the Colonel said (Green 45).

Miles knew Hank, that he always had weed. Colonel also added that the boy was never start the game basketball without feeling sober. Therefore, this can be said that the degree of addiction Hank toward weed was high, and that was the same with how Alaska addicted on having sex. Miles also remembered when the first she told about the things that she loved to do during youth, Alaska mention sex as one of the things: But there is so much to do: cigarettes to smoke, sex to have, swings to swing on (Green 18).

Miles also experienced it by himself. At the night before Alaska got an accident and died, Miles was challenged by Alaska to have sex with her.

Alaska started. “Truth or Dare, Pudge.”

“Dare.”

“Hook up with me.”

So I did.

It was that quick. I laughed, looked nervous, and she leaned in and tilted her head to the side, and we were kissing (Green 131).

Miles did not even think that they would have sex at that time, since he never thought that Alaska will dare him like that. The fact also said that Alaska

has a boyfriend, that is Jake, and Miles was currently dating Lara. This, however made Miles became wonder how Alaska could do that. He did not know the answers till the end, because Alaska has died after she had sex with Miles, and she became impulsive just want to go out from school to the place they did not know where. Colonel who became more sensitive after Alaska died, feel that Miles just only cared with the fantasy between the two of them (Alaska and Miles). Colonel finally uttered: "... she kissed a lot of guys, Pudge..." Colonel said (Green 167).

Alaska was the one who loved having sex, and this was not possible that she also kissed a lot of guys. So that, it was not weird things if she finally wanted to hook up with Miles, since Alaska ever told Miles that he was the one who get her attention, at the first time she came to Culver Creek.

Furthermore, there is one behavior of Alaska that indicate as escape-avoidance in which it is also involved her friends to do it, that is prank. Prank is a practical joke or mischievous trick played by people or group of people to someone, generally causing the victim to experience embarrassment and discomfort.

When Miles and Colonel introduced to each other, Miles was wondering why Chip Martin had to call as Colonel. But he did not ask Colonel the reason is. Fortunately, Alaska told Miles that: "...We pulled our first prank that year—we filled Classroom 4 with a thin layer of marbles. We've progressed some since then, of course." She laughed (Green 19).

So, the reason Chip Martin became Colonel was because he was the colonel, the planner and the executor to Alaska and Colonel's prank. While, Alaska was still Alaska, the reason behind the prank existed. After the first prank happened, Alaska and Colonel became closer, and made another plan to do another prank. Because of her tricky in doing prank, Alaska was known as the queen of prank among her friends in Culver Creek. As what Takumi said to Miles: "..., Alaska is famous for pranking..." Takumi said (Green 73).

Takumi who also knew Alaska well admitted that Alaska was really famous in pranking. She was truly smart, that was why she also smart in composes a plan. As the time close to Thanksgiving Day, Miles was asked by Alaska to stay at the dormitory in case they would do a plan for prank: "...There's a prank to plan. But I was thinking you should stay here, too. In fact, I have composed a list." Alaska said (Green 76).

Firstly, Miles felt guilty to do not come home at the Thanksgiving Day, but he tried to call her mother and explained that he would be fine in dorm along the Thanksgiving Day. After her mom already agreed, Miles come to Alaska and tell her that he would spend Thanksgiving Days at dorm. Alaska was so please to hear that, and when the day before Thanksgiving Day, Alaska asked him to follow her sneak into one of Weekday Warriors' room, Kevin.

Alaska questioned to Miles, what actually Miles saw when he observed the room, and Miles just answered that they loved money. Alaska did not seem satisfied with the answer, and she instructed Miles to go to bathroom and let Miles

At last, all of the behaviors that Alaska did tend to self-destructive behaviors. Self-destructive behaviors are behaviors that can cause harm to the person who does in which it makes Alaska lose control of herself and makes her got an accident which makes her die.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis discussed in the previous chapter, in this part of the report will be drawn the conclusion of the analysis. It is divided into two parts. The first is dealing with Alaska's characterization. Meanwhile, the second is concerning the way Alaska coped with her problem.

Firstly, Alaska is depicted as a smart girl, unpredictable, self-blame, hopeless, and impulsive. Alaska's intelligence can be seen from the way she expressed her ideas. Besides that, she helped her friends understand the difficult pre-calculus, and succeeded to assist them getting B+ score. Moreover, her intelligence deserved her scholarship. Despite her characterization that is smart, Alaska is also unpredictable. Alaska's unpredictability is shown along her attitude that easily changed. It is also admitted by other characters and her own confession. Another characterization of Alaska is that she often blamed herself about the incident happened when she was a child. She was also feeling guilty toward her father, thus, it made her always accused herself of anything wrong to be her fault. Alaska is also a hopeless person. Her frequent talk about dying and her notes in her favorite book *The General in His Labyrinth* indicates that she was hopeless toward her problem. Besides that, Alaska is also an impulsive person. It was proved when she betrayed her friend, Marya, and when she impulsively wanted to get out of the dormitory in the middle of the night while she was drunk.

Also, she challenged Miles to hook up with her without considering that both of Alaska and Miles have already been dating with another person.

The description of Alaska above shows that Alaska had a problem dealing with the incident of her mother's death. The trauma of that incident made Alaska used some ways to cope with her grief. Those are self-control, accepting responsibility, distancing, and escape-avoidance. The first is self-control. She uses this strategy as she never tells other people how bad her problem is. The second strategy is accepting responsibility. In using this strategy, Alaska tries to criticize or lecture herself deal with her problem. The third is distancing. Alaska used this strategy is shown as she does not like to go home because want to keep away from her trauma. The last strategy that used by Alaska is escape or avoidance. In this strategy, Alaska tends to use self-destructive behaviors as like smoking, having sex, drinking alcohol, and pranking. Self-destructive behavior has made Alaska more impulsive and brought her an accident. All of those strategies that Alaska use dare included in emotion-focused coping which has a function to regulate emotion.

Finally, the conclusion is Alaska's characterization shows that she has a problem that is grief. The way Alaska copes with grief can be seen while she used some of the strategies that included in emotion-focused coping. However, it is known that coping is not always effective, thus, some of the strategies that Alaska's used has made her failing in facing her problem. It can be said that Alaska has unresolved grief.



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